

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee

**Marty Isaac, Board President, CT Against Gun Violence,
Trumbull CT**

**Testimony re: Governor's HB 7027 AAC THE STATE
BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH
2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREOF**

**Oppose Section 1 (T94), Office of Policy Management,
Budget Reduction for Project Longevity**

Dear Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Rep. Walker, and
Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Marty Isaac and I am President of the Board of
Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I am here today to voice my
opposition to the proposed budget reduction within the Office of
Policy Management budget for Project Longevity.

For those of you that are not familiar with Project Longevity, it's a
program based on the concept of focused deterrence and group
accountability and its goal is to reduce gun violence in our inner
cities. It is remarkably effective. Last year, our state set a record
recording the fewest number of gun homicides in CT since CAGV
started tracking this data in 2002 – down by almost half to 53. The
most dramatic decreases occurred in our three largest cities:
Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven.

Project Longevity is based on the Group Violence Reduction
Strategy developed by the Center for Crime Prevention and
Control at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. The
research behind the strategy found that violence in troubled

neighborhoods is caused predominantly by a small number of people, typically less than 0.5 percent of a city's population, in specific identifiable groups (not gangs; these groups tend to be non-hierarchical and not formally organized).

Project Longevity has shown that violence can be reduced dramatically when community members and law enforcement join together to directly engage with these violent groups.

The data here in CT and studies, which I have included in the appendix to my testimony, back this up. For example, according to a recent Yale University study reported in the New Haven Register, Project Longevity was a factor in reducing nearly five gang-related shootings and homicides in New Haven every month!

A critical component of the Project Longevity strategy is the "call-in," a face-to-face meeting where partners engage group members and deliver a 3-part message.

- First, that group members are part of a community, that gun violence is unacceptable and that the community needs it to end.
- Second, that help is available to all who will accept it. Social service providers are standing by to assist with educational, employment, housing, medical, mental health and other needs.
- Third, that any future violence will be met with clear and certain consequences. The next time a homicide is traced to any member of a violent group, all members of that group will receive comprehensive law enforcement attention to any and all crimes any of its members are committing.

As these rules become understood by the street, behavior changes – swiftly. Rapid reduction in crime is not unique to Connecticut. Other cities have implemented Focused Deterrence programs and have obtained similar results.

I recognize that Connecticut has abundant budgetary challenges. However, the cuts proposed for Project Longevity in this year's budget will have a devastating impact on the program. Ironically, the proposed cuts will likely exacerbate budgetary challenges:

- Shootings will increase.
- The cost of managing this incremental crime wave will outpace the cost savings.
- And most certainly, additional lives will be lost.

I appreciate your time this evening. I kindly request that you not reduce the funding for Project Longevity.

Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Project Longevity Launched to Reduce Gang and Gun Violence in Connecticut's Cities

Government Officials, Community Members, Service Providers and Law Enforcement Join Forces in Statewide Anti-Violence Initiative

Attorney General Eric Holder, U.S. Attorney David Fein and Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy joined members of law enforcement, public officials, social service providers, community leaders and researchers in New Haven today to launch "Project Longevity," a comprehensive initiative to reduce gun violence in Connecticut's major cities. Project Longevity uses a strategy that has shown violence can be reduced dramatically when community members and law enforcement join together to directly engage with these groups and clearly communicate a community message against violence, a law enforcement message about the consequences of further violence and an offer of help for those who want it. To accomplish this, law enforcement, social service providers and community members are recruited, assembled and trained to engage in a sustained relationship with violent groups.

"Project Longevity will send a powerful message to those who would commit violent crimes targeting their fellow citizens that such acts will not be tolerated and that help is available for all those who wish to break the cycle of violence and gang activity," said Attorney General Holder. "Today's announcement underscores our commitment to working together – across levels of government and jurisdictional boundaries – to protect the American people from the crime that threatens too many neighborhoods and claims far too many innocent lives."

Project Longevity is based on a model that has been successful in reducing gun violence in multiple neighborhoods across the country and represents the first time the strategy is being implemented statewide.

"On the state level, I have directed my administration to focus our criminal justice resources on urban violence," Governor Malloy said. "We agree that no strategy will be effective without the support of the community. This means parents, clergy, neighborhood leaders, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles – everyone working toward one goal. We are working to regain the trust of the African American and Latino communities. We need their help. The lives of these young people are too valuable not to act."

Funded by federal, state and local sources, Project Longevity is being launched initially in three Connecticut cities – New Haven, Hartford and Bridgeport.

“After more than a year of hard work and preparation by so many public and private partners, I am pleased to announce Project Longevity, our statewide anti-violence initiative,” said U.S. Attorney Fein. “Many dedicated people and organizations have come together to support this proven strategy to reduce gang and gun violence through focused deterrence.”

A critical component of the Project Longevity strategy is the “call-in,” a face-to-face meeting where partners engage group members and deliver certain key messages. First, that group members are part of a community, that gun violence is unacceptable and that the community needs it to end. Second, that help is available to all who will accept it in order to transition out of the gang lifestyle, and that social service providers are standing by to assist with educational, employment, housing, medical, mental health and other needs. Third, that any future violence will be met with clear and certain consequences. The next time a homicide is traced to any member of a violent group, all members of that group will receive increased and comprehensive law enforcement attention to any and all crimes any of its members are committing.

Yesterday, the first call-ins of two groups were convened in New Haven. At the call-ins, approximately 25 individuals heard the Project Longevity message from senior leadership of the New Haven Police Department, federal and state prosecutors, outreach workers and other members of the New Haven community. One Project Longevity participant, Adult Education Director for the New Haven Board of Education Alicia Caraballo, spoke about losing her 24-year-old son when he was shot and killed in New Haven in April 2008.

Project Longevity is based on the Group Violence Reduction Strategy developed by the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. The research behind the strategy, which was first implemented in Boston as “Operation Ceasefire” in the mid-1990s, has found that violence in troubled neighborhoods is caused predominantly by a small number of people who are members of street gangs, drug crews and other identified groups. These groups, whose members typically constitute less than 0.5 percent of a city’s population, often have little organization, hierarchy or common purpose, and commit violent acts primarily for personal reasons, not to achieve any economic gain or other advantage. The Group Violence Reduction Strategy, which also has been deployed in areas of Chicago, Cincinnati, Providence, R.I., and elsewhere, has resulted in a 40 to 60 percent reduction in group-related homicides in certain neighborhoods. After Project Longevity is established in Hartford and Bridgeport, the program may be deployed in other Connecticut cities if research and data analysis of a city’s homicide rate determine that the model offers an appropriate solution to gun violence .

The Rev. William Mathis has been appointed as Project Longevity’s New Haven Program Manager. The Rev. Mathis is also the Pastor of Springs of Life-Giving Water Church in New Haven, an attorney, a former prosecutor and an adjunct professor at Quinnipiac University and the University of New Haven. As program manager, the Rev. Mathis is responsible for developing effective and sustainable working relationships between law enforcement, service providers and community members to insure Project Longevity’s success.

The organizational structure of Project Longevity in New Haven includes a Governing Board, Strategy and Implementation Team, Research Team, Law Enforcement Team, Community Service Provider Team and Community Engagement Team, all of which meet regularly. Project Longevity’s Governing Board includes: U.S. Attorney Fein, Governor Malloy, State Senator Toni Harp, State Representative Toni

Walker, New Haven Mayor John DeStefano, New Haven Alderperson Jorge Perez, New Haven State's Attorney Michael Dearington, Court Support Services Executive Director William Carbone, Connecticut Department of Correction Commissioner Leo Arnone, Director of the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at John Jay College of Criminal Justice David Kennedy, and Yale University's Vice President for New Haven and State Affairs and Campus Development Bruce Alexander.

The Strategy and Implementation Team is co-chaired by New Haven Police Chief Dean Esserman and New Haven businessman Howard Hill, and includes members of law enforcement, service providers, researchers and the community. Chief Esserman has previously partnered with the Center for Crime Prevention and Control to implement a similar strategy when he served as police chief in Providence. Several community and business leaders in New Haven, as well as members of the New Haven Clergy Association, are also actively involved in Project Longevity. In order to assist identified individual transition from a destructive gang lifestyle, Project Longevity has engaged nine service providers in the New Haven area, including Children's Community Program of Connecticut, Community Service Administration for the City of New Haven, Consultation Center (Yale), Gateway Community College, Elm City Communities, New Haven Family Alliance, Project Model Offender Reintegration Experience (M.O.R.E.), Workforce Alliance/CT Works and United Way of Greater New Haven. The University of New Haven, Yale University and the University of Cincinnati are working with law enforcement to collect and analyze crime data and provide research support to identify the groups and individuals that will be contacted through Project Longevity. Many of these individuals are already known to law enforcement and/or are under the supervision of probation or parole officers.

Other participating Justice Department agencies in Project Longevity include: the FBI; Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the U.S. Marshals Service.

<http://www.nhregister.com/opinion/20160329/forum-new-havens-project-longevity-sets-pace-on-violence-reduction-police-community-collaboration>

Forum: New Haven's Project Longevity sets pace on violence reduction, police-community collaboration



David M. Kennedy

By David Kennedy

POSTED: 03/29/16, 5:18 PM EDT | UPDATED: ON 03/29/2016

[2 COMMENTS](#)

Watch the news and you'll see cities across the country grappling with the division between law enforcement and communities of color, and some even seeing spikes in homicide after years of decline. Meanwhile, [Project Longevity in New Haven](#) is a reminder that we actually know what works when it comes to bringing police and communities together and cutting violent crime. A recent study shows the initiative has reduced homicides and shootings, and it has received high-level support on the national stage. On a recent visit to New Haven, FBI Director James Comey identified [Project](#)

[Longevity](#) as a national model. “I think Project Longevity shows what can happen when law enforcement and a community come together and come up with solutions to problems jointly that are plaguing the neighborhoods,” Comey said. So what is New Haven doing right?

[Project Longevity](#) — supported by the state of Connecticut, Yale professors Tracey Meares and Andrew Papachristos, and the University of New Haven — is based on a model with a long track record, in many different settings around the nation, of effectively reducing violence. It has unparalleled results in formal [evaluations](#), earning it the highest evidence-based rating from the Department of Justice’s [CrimeSolutions.gov](#). A brand-new [meta-analysis](#) by a pair of Harvard researchers said of the approach that it “has the largest direct impact on crime and violence, by far, of any intervention in this report.” And it’s working in the streets of New Haven. A [recent study out of Yale University](#) found that in the three years since Project Longevity’s implementation, shootings among the highest-risk population in the city have dropped almost 73 percent per month on average. Papachristos, one of the evaluation’s authors, called the approach an example of “community policing and service providers actually (coming) together and (doing) a lot of good.” Another promising indicator is that gunfire itself has declined: a recent [report based on the ShotSpotter system](#) covering part of the city found a 38.5 percent drop in incidents between 2014 and 2015 — the second-largest of 46 cities analyzed nationally.

Originally developed in Boston as “Operation Ceasefire,” and now used in scores of cities, some supported directly by my organization, the [National Network for Safe Communities](#), Project Longevity is based on the reality that serious violence is highly concentrated. As in other cities nationally, more than half of New Haven’s homicides and shootings are driven by less than one percent of its population, primarily members of street groups — gangs, drug crews and the like. Since those groups are at enormously elevated risk of violent victimization or offending, focusing on them can drive violence down dramatically. The strategy relies on a strong partnership of community members, social service providers, and law enforcement, who speak directly to group members at “call-in” meetings, make it crystal clear that the community cares about them but rejects violence, and make them a promise: we’ll help you if you let us, and we’ll stop you if you make us. When the streets believe the new rules are real, they respond: violence goes down, and the number of group members who take advantage of the help offered goes up. New Haven has kept its promise on both counts: those who have asked for help have gotten it — including housing, emergency support, job training, educational placement, and the like — and groups that have killed have received the full attention of law enforcement. New Haven has also begun using what we call “custom notifications,” an innovative national practice that has police commanders, along with community representatives and service providers, pay home visits to men believed to be involved in street disputes or whose criminal records place them at high risk for victimization, let them know their legal risk, and offer them support.

This is just as profound and transformative as it sounds. New Haven Police Chief Dean Esserman, like other leading edge police executives across the country, knows from experience that policing communities in ways they experience as disrespectful and abusive — and that burden neighborhoods with the permanent damage of high levels of

arrest, incarceration, and criminal records — alienates those communities and does not necessarily reduce violence. A sincere believer in work that addresses crime seriously and fairly, Esserman has been instrumental in making the shift toward a focused, community-based approach that not only reduces violence but also strengthens perceptions of police legitimacy — a critically important step, since we know that where legitimacy goes up, crime goes down. This work has led to an [unprecedented interagency working relationship](#) between multiple units of the New Haven Police Department; police departments from surrounding towns; state police; ATF, FBI, and DEA; the Department of Correction; probation and parole; the U.S. attorney's office; and the state attorney's office. These agencies meet routinely to focus on the small core population driving violence in order to keep them safe, address the community's most pressing safety concerns, and head off immediate threats of violence.

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With this work, New Haven joins a growing number of cities — including New Orleans, Chicago, Oakland and many others — committed to improving public safety while at the same time rebuilding fractured relationships between law enforcement and communities. Most encouraging is that Project Longevity is not a success for New Haven alone. At a time when the nation's attention is properly focused on the effects of mass incarceration and criminal justice system overreach, this strategy points the way forward for other communities suffering from daily violence, and where street stops, arrest, and imprisonment remain far too common. Much work remains, but it is by far our best route to strengthening communities to set their own public safety standards, narrowing the net of law enforcement, and keeping the most vulnerable population alive and out of prison.

David M. Kennedy is professor of criminal justice and director of the [National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College of Criminal Justice](#). He is working with New Haven on Project Longevity.

<http://www.nhregister.com/general-news/20161231/new-haven-homicides-and-shooting-down-in-2016-community-policing-credited-with-other-programs>

New Haven homicides and shooting down in 2016; community policing credited with other programs

By [Juliemar Ortiz](#), *New Haven Register*

POSTED: 12/31/16, 3:15 PM EST | UPDATED: ON 12/31/2016

[3 COMMENTS](#)

NEW HAVEN >> As 2017 begins, statistics on last year's shootings continue to show that crime has been decreasing in New Haven since 2011 and Assistant Chief of Police Archie Generoso said it's a result of community policing efforts.

"The difference is how we police here now, we're doubling our community policing efforts, we're working with all our partners to keep crime down and it's working," Generoso said.

The numbers of homicides, non-fatal shootings, and shots fired have been consistently lower since 2011. Generoso said the real indicator of violence is not homicides, it's total shootings and shots fired. Records show, that between 2003 and 2012, the city we averaged 126 total shootings a year. The average from 2013 to 2016 was 63.

"That's half," Generoso said. "We've been able to cut that in half."

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Records of shots fired only go back to 2011. That year there were around 450 "shots fired" complaints, which includes using technology to detect them. Since then, the New Haven Police Department has expanded its [Shotspotter program](#), which uses audio sensors and triangulation to determine the location of gunfire. Earlier in 2016, the city increased its Shotspotter coverage area by three times, placing the technology in neighborhoods with the highest number of such crimes. Even with that expansion, the number of reported shots fired only went up to an average of 150.

"We're keeping the level of violence down, there's a consistency in that, we're showing now, we have a 4-year stat showing that," Generoso said.

Programs such [Project Longevity](#), daily [intelligence meetings](#), CompStat, and other community policing efforts are all part of the formula that helped New Haven go from having 34 homicides in 2011, to 13 in 2016. There were [15 homicides in the city in 2015](#) and 13 homicides [in 2014](#).

Project Longevity features customized notifications, which is when Project Manager Stacy R. Spell and other community members visit the homes of teens who are at risk of being victims or perpetrators of a violent crime. The program aims to work with individuals identified as being in gangs or groups who are in danger of being perpetrators or victims of violence. They are invited to a “call in,” a sort of intervention, where services are offered as incentives not to engage in gun-related violence, including help with getting high school diplomas, driver’s licenses and housing assistance.

According to a 2015 study by Yale University sociologists. Project Longevity has had a positive impact in reducing shootings and homicides in New Haven.

“So it’s no mistake that our first call in was in 2012,” Generoso said.

Police Lt. Herb Johnson said he is very proud about the numbers this year and looks forward to reducing crime even more in 2017.

“It doesn’t happen with just us, it’s a great collaborative effort. When all the wheels are turning together that’s when we strive, and with the community as well,” Johnson said. “I’m looking forward to the new year, we’re going to have some changes, we got a lot of work to continue to do year, but we have great young talent here.”

In addition to preventative measures, the Police Department also continues to aggressively investigate shootings and homicides, both to seek [justice](#) and bring closure to grieving families.

Of the 13 homicides in New Haven this year, 10 were victims of shootings and 12 were under the age of 36. Two victims were stabbed, and one was strangled. There were arrests made in two of the cases and the others remain open investigations.

<http://news.yale.edu/2016/04/21/new-haven-s-project-longevity-shows-promise-reducing-violent-crime-city>

New Haven's Project Longevity shows promise in reducing violent crime in the city

By Bess Connolly Martell

April 21, 2016



A pilot project in New Haven aimed at reducing group member involved shootings and homicides (GMIs) led to a significant reduction in gang-related violent crime in the city, according to a study by Yale researchers [published in the journal Crime and Delinquency](#).

Project Longevity — a statewide, focused-deterrence gun violence reduction strategy conducted between November 2012 and April 2014 — aimed to leverage group dynamics in order to curb violence on New Haven streets. Law enforcement, social service providers, and community members conducted “call-ins,” meetings with members of violent street groups to deliver a unified message: that the gun violence must stop, that there is help for

those who want it, but that those who choose to continue committing acts of violence will meet with swift legal consequences.



Michael Sierra-Arevalo, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology

Michael Sierra-Arevalo, Ph.D. candidate in the [Department of Sociology](#), coauthored the study with Yannick Charrette, postdoctoral associate in sociology, and Andrew Papachristos, associate professor of sociology. The researchers examined data on lethal and non-lethal shootings in the city using a series of models to test whether Project Longevity was related to a significant decrease in GMI shootings and homicides in New Haven. The results suggest that, even accounting for a variety of alternative explanations, the implementation of Project Longevity was associated with a reduction of nearly five GMI shootings and homicides each month.

"The research that was done in New Haven is contributing to a growing body of work across a variety of cities that supports focused-deterrence as a viable way to address public safety concerns," says Sierra-Arevalo.

Project Longevity was modeled on the group violence intervention model pioneered in the 1990s known as Boston Ceasefire. Representatives from law enforcement agencies spoke to street group members first, making sure to articulate the new rules being implemented and stressing that those who continue to engage in gun violence (and their groups) would meet with increased attention from law enforcement agents. Next, social service providers showed attendees that help is available, including housing assistance, high school diploma or general education development classes, job training, and drug or alcohol recovery programs. Finally, community volunteers known to and respected by the street group members acted as "moral voices," articulating to attendees the anti-violence message of the

program to attendees and drawing on their own unique positions within the community to help attendees connect with the message.

Sierra-Arevalo explains that Project Longevity is moving away from traditional approaches such as broadly applied police sweeps or enforcement of minor offenses. “This kind of strategy is something that cities in a variety of places and a variety of contexts should really consider including in their repertoire for providing for public safety, particularly when it comes to gun violence.”

According to the researchers, New Haven’s Project Longevity is one more instance of how targeting specific offenders — in this case, members of violent street groups — can significantly enhance public safety.

“It is a move away from overly-broad strategies like broken-windows policing. It is about directly addressing very particular problems in very targeted ways and by extension keeping more people out of the criminal justice system,” says Sierra-Arevalo. “We are really trying to focus limited resources on those most likely to be victims and offenders of gun violence.”